

REMARKS

Applicant had a telephone interview with the Examiner regarding the claim language of claim 12. Applicant has amended the claim according to the changes suggested by the Examiner.

The Examiner has rejected claims 12-14, 17 & 18 as being anticipated by Quinn (US Patent Number 3,688,276).

Claim 12: Quinn teaches a game machine (16) that is a slot machine – i.e., it is a machine whose operation is begun by dropping a coin into a slot (48). The player puts in coins. (Col 4, 38-40) The machine counts the coins and the number of counted coins is shown to the player. (Col 4, 47-50) The number of coins needed for a ticket to be generated is shown to the player. (Col 4, 40-41) A ticket is dispensed when the number of counted coins equals the number of coins needed. (Col 2, 6-12) Quinn teaches vending a lottery ticket, thus it is a gambling machine. Lotteries inherently pay off according to matching of symbols.

Applicant has amended claim 12 to define a gaming machine as comprising a processor, wherein said processor implements a game of chance on said gaming machine, said game of chance paying off according to matching of symbols; or said gaming machine comprising a video poker machine, video keno machine or video bingo machine. Based on the amendment, claim 12 is not anticipated or obvious over Quinn.

Claim 13: The counting the coins is accomplished by counting coin pulses off of the machine's hard meter and the ticket is dispensed base on the number of coins deposited.

(Col 2, 6-12)

Claim 13 depends on amended claim 12. For the reasons stated above, claim 13 is not anticipated or obvious over Quinn.

Claim 14: The ticket is a lottery ticket. (Abstract)

Claim 14 depends on amended claim 12. For the reasons stated above, claim 14 is not anticipated or obvious over Quinn.

Claim 17: The number of counted coins is set to zero once a ticket is dispensed. (Col 4, 47-50)

Claim 17 depends on amended claim 12. For the reasons stated above, claim 17 is not anticipated or obvious over Quinn.

Claim 18: Quinn teaches using a remote unit to set the price of the ticket. (Col 1, 64- Col 2, 16)

Claim 18 depends on amended claim 12. For the reasons stated above, claim 18 is not anticipated or obvious over Quinn.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 3, 4, 6 & 8 as being obvious over Castellano et al. (US Patent Number 5, 477,952) in view of Dabrowski (US Patent Number 5,544,728).

Claims 1: Castellano teaches a game machine (Col 13, 23). There is a counter for counting the number of coins a player has placed in the

machine. (Col 6, 32-36) The numeric counter counts all coins placed into the gaming machine – thus it continues to count coins until a ticket is generated. There is a means (the game machine's display) for showing the player when the ticket will be printed (i.e. when the player wins the game). There is a ticket dispenser (31). Castellano teaches that there is readout for externally communicating the current coin count. (Col 6, 11-13) It is not clear, however, whether this readout is for visually displaying the number of coins to the player. Dabrowski teaches a visual display (126) for displaying the number of credits remaining (corresponding to the number of coins) to the player. This allows the player to see how many coins the player has inserted into the machine and how many are available for gambling. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have a visual display of the number of coins entered in order to allow the player to see how many coins the player has inserted into the machine and how many are available for gambling.

Amended claim 1 requires a dispensing unit comprising a numeric counter for counting the number of coins placed in said gaming machine and visually displaying to the player the number of coins. The numeric counter counts coins until a ticket is generated. The numeric counter resets the counted coins to zero once a ticket is generated. The dispensing unit further comprises a visual display showing a player

number of coins needed to generate a ticket. The dispensing unit has a ticket dispensing apparatus.

The Examiner states that Castellano shows the player when the ticket will be printed, when the player wins the game. The claims state that the ticket is generated based on the number of coins placed in the machine, not on winning the game. The claims of the present invention continue to count the coins and display them to the user even after a bet is made. Further Castellano in view of Dabrowski does not teach that the numeric counter resets the counted coins to zero once a ticket is generated.

Castellano relates to an electronic coin tracker for coin operated machines. The coin tracker monitors the deposit of coins and the activity of the machine and reports this activity electronically. Because the money counter is done electronically, it is not seen by the user. The readouts of the money can only be detected by electronic means. A transportable electronic sensor receives and stores the readouts. A central computer directs the transportable electronic sensor to output the stored readouts and receive the readouts. The coin tracker data is uploaded to the hand held in binary coded decimal format and is converted to ASCII comma delimited format within the hand held. Further, the money counter is resettable based only on the previous interrogation read out.

Dabrowski relates to a bill validator that retrofits a coin and token only slot machine to be operable with paper currency. The insertion of paper currency causes a credit meter to be incremented according to the value of the paper currency.

Further, there is nothing in is nothing in Castellano which teaches to add a visual display as shown in Dabrowski to show a player the number of coins added to a machine prior to a ticket being dispensed. The purpose of Castellano is to electronically read the coin counter to make sure that the number of coins received is equal to the number of coins played by the machine. The person who owns the machine requires the information, not the player who is playing the machine. Therefore, there is no teaching to combine Castellano in view of Dabrowski.

Claim 3: The dispensing unit is placed inside the game machine. (Col 12, 22-28)

For the reasons stated above, claim 3 is not obvious over Castellano in view of Dabrowski.

Claim 4: The dispensing unit is an add-on to any existing gaming machine and gaming device. (Col 16, 17-20)

For the reasons stated above, claim 4 is not obvious over Castellano in view of Dabrowski.

Claim 6: The dispensing unit is a self-contained unit that does not affect the play or outcome of the game.

For the reasons stated above, claim 6 is not obvious over Castellano in view of Dabrowski.

Claim 8: Fig 1 clearly shows four coins slots (21-24) that correspond to different denominations (i.e. nickel, dime, quarter, and dollar).

For the reasons stated above, claim 8 is not obvious over Castellano in view of Dabrowski.

The Examiner has rejected claim 2 as being obvious over Castellano and Dabrowski as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Bittner et al. (US Patent Number 5, 290, 033).

Claim 2: Castellano and Dabrowski teach the invention substantially as claimed. Castellano does not, however, teach mounting the device on the side of the game machine. Bittner teaches mounting an analogous device (202) on the side of the gaming machine. Castellano teaches that the device can be used as a retrofit to existing game machines. In cases where the device did not fit within the game cabinet, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have attached the dispensing unit to the gaming machine as a side mounted box in order to retrofit a gaming machine that did not have room inside the gaming machine cabinet.

Bittner relates to a gaming machine and game coupons for allowing an operator to redeem winning game coupons by inserting them directly into the gaming machine rather than by taking them to a cashier. The

gaming machine includes a bill validator for accepting currency and winning game coupons from an operator. The gaming machine issues game credits to the player depending on the prize codes of the submitted game coupons.

Castellano and Dabrowski in view of Bittner does not make obvious claim 2 for the reasons stated above for amended claim 1. Further, there is no teaching to combine the teachings of Castellano and Bittner, since Bittner uses the side mounted box for redeeming coupons which is not taught by Castellano, nor Dabrowski.

The Examiner has rejected claims 5 & 9 as being obvious over Castellano and Dabrowski as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Heidel et al. (US patent Number 5,342,047).

Heidel relates to a touch screen video gaming machine. Video gaming machines find application as video lottery terminals in state administered lotteries. As video lottery terminals these gaming machines function in the same manner as video gaming machines found in state regulated casinos except that they generally use ticket printers to print tickets can be exchanged for cash payments instead of paying winning amounts through a coin hopper as in conventional gaming machines. The video lottery terminal also includes a coin acceptor and ticket printer.

Claim 5: Castellano and Dabrowski teach the invention substantially as claimed. Castellano teaches that the device may be attached to virtually

any gaming machine. (Col 16, 17-20) Dabrowski teaches attaching a device to a slot (i.e., gaming) machine. (Abstract) Castellano's invention is intended to detect and prevent fraud. (Abstract) Fraud is a significant problem in the gaming industry. Heidel teaches a game machine that can be used a number of different games. Heidel illustrates video poker (Fig 1) and video keno (Fig 2b). Video bingo is a well-known equivalent. Video poker, keno, and bingo are all extremely well known in the art. They are extremely popular with many players and, along with reel-type machines, form the backbone of the electronic gaming industry. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have applied Castellano's coin tracker to video poker, keno, and bingo machines in order to detect and prevent fraud.

There is nothing in Castellano or Dabrowski which teaches combining with Heidel. Castellano and Dabrowski in view of Heidel does not make obvious claim 5 for the reasons stated above for claim 1.

Claim 9: Castellano and Dabrowski teach the invention substantially as claimed. Castellano teaches printing a ticket as a reward, but does not teach that the ticket is a lottery ticket. Heidel teaches dispensing a lottery ticket. (Col 1, 10-18)

Castellano and Dabrowski in view of Heidel does not make obvious claim 9 for the reasons stated above for claim 1. Further Castellano teaches redemption tickets which are commonly redeemable at a central

stand of the gaming arcade for small prizes, or souvenirs. There is nothing in Castellano which teaches the ticket to be a raffle, sweepstakes or lottery ticket. Further, there is nothing in Castellano or Dabrowski which teaches combining with Heidel.

The Examiner has rejected claims 7,10, 11 as being obvious over Castellano and Dabrowski as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Piechowiak et al. (US Patent Number 6,012,982).

Piechowiak relates to a bonus award feature in linked gaming machines having a common feature controller. Each of the linked gaming machines is connected to a common controller. In normal mode, each of the linked gaming machines operates like a conventional gaming machine. A bonus feature is added where the generation of combinations of bonus symbols is used by a central controller to build up a pooled bonus value based upon the values of the combinations of bonus symbols generated by all the linked gaming machines. When a player hits a combination which causes the accumulated bonus value to meet or exceed a predetermined value, a bonus award is given to the player which caused the threshold to be exceeded. To discourage players from not playing any of the linked gaming machines until the accumulated bonus value is near the threshold, each machine has an independent hit counter which is incremented based on the number of occurrences of bonus combinations generated by that machine.

Claim 7: Castellano and Dabrowski teach the invention substantially as disclosed. Castellano's Fig 3 shows the counter (12) counting pulses of the game machines hard meter (52). Castellano does not, however, teach awarding the player a bonus based on the number of coins played.

Piechowiak teaches a game that awards a bonus based on a player reaching a certain coin-in threshold. (Abstract) Bonuses are well known to the art and are commonly used to increase player interest. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have awarded the player a bonus based on the number of coins played in order to increase interest in the game.

Claim 7 requires that the numeric counter counts coin pulses off of the gaming machine's hard meter, and bonuses a player based on the number of coins or pulses played.

Piechowiak relates to bonusing of linked gaming machines. Piechowiak teaches that each machine has an independent hit counter which is incremented based on the number of occurrences of bonus combinations generated by that machine. It does not teach that the numeric counter counts the coin pulses off of the gaming machine's hard meter and bonus a player based on the number of coins or pulses played, not based on the bonuses previously paid.

Castellano and Dabrowski in view of Piechowiak do not make obvious claim 7 for the reasons stated above. Further claim 7 requires

that the bonus be paid on a single gaming machine. Piechowiak requires that the bonus be paid on linked gaming machines. Further, there is nothing in Castellano or Dabrowski which would combine a bonusing system for the number of coins played. Also, there is nothing in Castellano or Dabrowski which would teach linking games, since each game is individually controlled.

Claim 10: Piechowiak teaches linking games so that a combination of devices must have a certain number of coins inserted before a bonus (ticket) is dispensed. (Abstract)

Castellano and Dabrowski in view of Piechowiak does not make obvious claim 10 for the reasons stated above. Further, there is nothing in Castellano or Dabrowski which would teach linking games, since each device is individually controlled.

Claim 11: Piechowiak teaches that there is a remote unit (122) for changing the number of coins necessary to generate the ticket.

Castellano and Dabrowski in view of Piechowiak does not make obvious claim 11 for the reasons stated above. None of these references teach a remote unit for changing the number of coins necessary to generate the ticket. Further Piechowiak's bonusing system does not relate to coins played but to the amount of bonusing.

The Examiner has rejected claims 15 & 16 as being obvious over Quinn as applied to claim 12 or 14 in view of the Big Game Lottery.

Claim 15 & 16: Quinn teaches the invention substantially as claimed.

Quinn teaches dispensing lottery tickets, but does not go into the mechanics of how lotteries operate. Lotteries operate using well-known principles. The Big Game is merely one of a myriad of examples of lotteries. The winner of lotteries is determined by holding a drawing- i.e., by lot. The size of the lottery jackpot is based on the number of tickets sold. In other words, the bonus prize is based on a percentage of total coins placed into all participating gaming machines. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have chosen the winner of the lottery by a random drawing and to have based the jackpot on a percentage of total coins placed into the gaming machines in order to follow standard practice for running a lottery.

For the reasons stated above for claim 12 above, claims 15 and 16 are not obvious over Quinn in view of Big Game Lottery.


Applicant believes that the application is now in condition for allowance.

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